Human-guided flight helps rare ibises

LEVEL A2/B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. Have you ever seen birds flying in a V shape? Where?
2. What animals in your country need protection? Why?
3. Would you like to help animals as a volunteer? Why or why not?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

migrate
to travel from one place to another at certain times each year

flock
a group of birds that stay and fly together

extinct
no longer existing in the wild or anywhere

reintroduction
putting an animal back into the wild in a place it left

volunteer
a person who helps without being paid

ultralight
a very small, light aircraft for one or two people

predator
an animal that hunts and eats other animals

colony
a group of animals living and breeding in one place

III. READING

Fifteen new northern bald ibises reached Alt Empordà in Catalonia, Spain. They flew from Austria, guided by human "foster parents" in an ultralight aircraft. The birds joined a flock already living at the site. This species was extinct in Europe for 300 years.

During the 20th century, numbers in Morocco fell from 9,000 to 250. Europe then began captive breeding and reintroduction in Austria and in Jerez, Andalucía. Biologist Bernat Garrigós runs the Alt Empordà project. His team has two full-time and two part-time staff, plus 20 volunteers.

The group works with Aiguamolls Park, a protected wetland, to reduce risks from predators and deaths until the birds can migrate and breed on their own. Over 10 years, it aims for 50 breeding pairs and about 300 birds in the wild, linked in colonies across Europe.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian**: *"Rare northern bald ibises take flight in...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where did the fifteen ibises arrive?
2. How were the birds guided on their flight?
3. How long were northern bald ibises extinct in Europe?
4. Who runs the Alt Empordà project?
5. What is the 10-year target for the project?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Why might birds need help to learn a migration route?
2. What should people do if they find a bird nest near home?
3. Is using aircraft to guide birds a good idea? Why or why not?
4. Which local place could be a good stopover for birds?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Should / ought to

Use should/ought to to give advice. Form: should + base verb; ought to + base verb. Both mean the same; ought to is slightly more formal.

*"Volunteers **should wear** bright vests in the wetland."*
*"Teams **ought to prepare** safe routes before flights."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete with should/ought to + the verb in brackets.

1. Staff (monitor) ___ the colony during storms for safety. _____
2. Volunteers (report) ___ predators near nests at once. _____
3. Foster parents (guide) ___ young birds on training flights. _____
4. Visitors (keep) ___ a safe distance from the wetland birds. _____
5. Biologists (plan) ___ releases with park staff each season. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8 minutes warm-up, 8–10 minutes vocabulary, 10–12 minutes reading, 8 minutes comprehension, 10 minutes discussion. Combine grammar with reading time if needed.
- Pre-teach place names (Alt Empordà, Jerez) and say ultralight as ultra-light. Use a Europe map to show the route from Austria to Spain.
- Reading and discussion: do a first silent read, then a second read to underline numbers (15, 300 years, 9,000→250, 50 pairs, 300 birds) and names. The text mentions deaths of birds; allow students to talk about the risk in general terms, and do not ask for personal stories.
- Differentiation: stronger students summarise project steps (guide, settle, breed, spread). Others match vocabulary to simple pictures of birds, nests, and aircraft.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Elicit simple reasons (weather, distance). If answers stop at “safety”, ask for examples.
2. Guide students to suggest calm actions (observe, call a park, keep distance).
3. Split class: pros/cons. After sharing, swap sides and add one new reason each.
4. Have pairs choose a real local park or river and explain why it suits birds.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: In pairs, write a 60-word notice for visitors explaining how to behave near nests.

Presentation: Make a 2-minute mini-briefing about Alt Empordà’s 10-year goal, using three numbers from the text.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Should / ought to

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where did the fifteen ibises arrive?
   Alt Empordà in Catalonia, Spain.
2. How were the birds guided on their flight?
   By human guides in an ultralight aircraft.
3. How long were northern bald ibises extinct in Europe?
   For 300 years.
4. Who runs the Alt Empordà project?
   Biologist Bernat Garrigós.
5. What is the 10-year target for the project?
   50 breeding pairs and about 300 birds in the wild.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete with should/ought to + the verb in brackets.

1. Staff ___ the colony during storms for safety.
   should/ought to monitor
2. Volunteers ___ predators near nests at once.
   should/ought to report
3. Foster parents ___ young birds on training flights.
   should/ought to guide
4. Visitors ___ a safe distance from the wetland birds.
   should/ought to keep
5. Biologists ___ releases with park staff each season.
   should/ought to plan

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use should/ought to to give advice. Form: should + base verb; ought to + base verb. Both mean the same; ought to is slightly more formal. (Examples constructed.)

> *"Volunteers* **should wear** *bright vests in the wetland."*
> *"Teams* **ought to prepare** *safe routes before flights."*